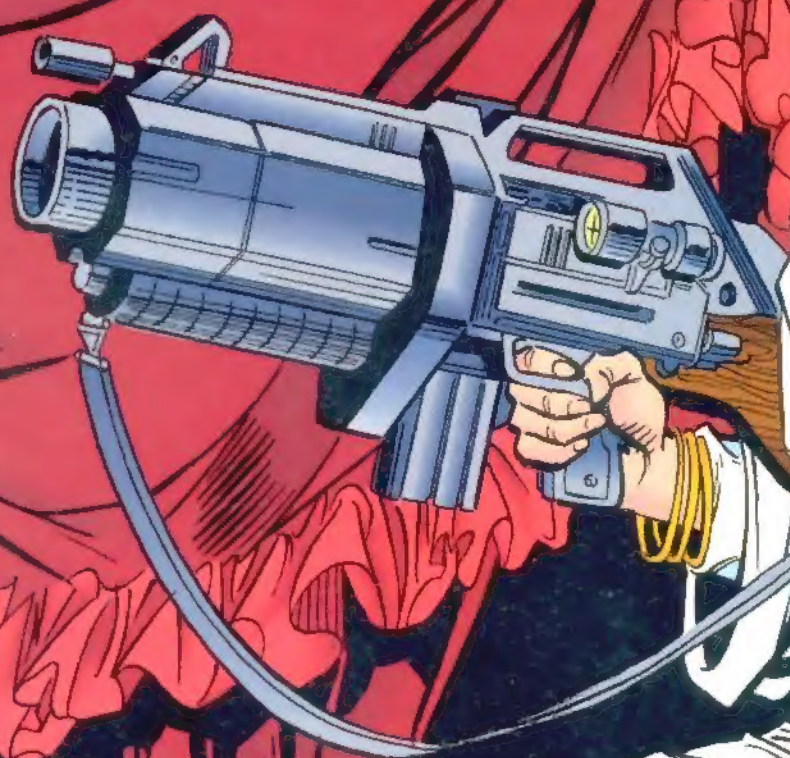



STEEL
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STEEL



*True
Romance*

L. SIMONSON ♥ BATISTA ♥ FABER

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FATHER, WHAT DO YOU MEAN YOUR SOURCES SAY MY COUSIN IS ACTING **PECULIAR**?

YES, SIR. SARAH **IS** AN AMERICAN SENATOR, **BANG** ON, BUT--

MILES, WILL YOU PLEASE PICK UP THE RE-CEIVER!!



NO, SIR. I WON'T BE **CHEEKY**, BUT--
HER POLICIES **CAN** HAVE INTERNATIONAL RAMIFICATIONS. THAT'S TRUE, BUT--



I CAN'T BELIEVE SHE'S **ALTERED** HER POSITION ON **GUN CONTROL** HERE!

THAT'S **BONKERS**, SIR. SHE'S **HATED** GUNS EVER SINCE HER BROTHER WAS KILLED.

APART FROM WHICH, SHE'D NEVER--



I SUSPECT YOU'RE USING THIS "**CRISIS**" TO LURE ME INTO THE FAMILY BUSINESS.

WELL, IT'S DOOMED TO FAILURE. I'VE CHOSEN THE **THEATER**, NOT **SPYING**... ALL RIGHT, THEN... **IN-TELLIGENCE--**

OH, VERY WELL, I'LL **SPEAK** WITH HER. BUT AFTER THAT--

YES, SIR. **GOOD-BYE**, FATHER.



BOTHER! IT'S A FAIR **BOX-UP!**

STILL, WE'RE MEETING AFTER THE **PLAY** TONIGHT. IT WILL BE EASY ENOUGH TO **QUIZ** YOU, SARAH MY GIRL...



... BUT, TRUTH TO TELL, I THINK THE OLD BOY HAS **FINALLY--**

"--TAKEN LEAVE
OF HIS SENSES."

IT'S
MAD-
NESS!

SENATOR
WEAVER...OTHER
COLLEAGUES WHO
HELPED DRAFT THE
ANTI-GUN LEGISLA-
TION...TURNED PRO-
GUN, NOW...

GUNS
HO, TOO!
TURNED IN-
TO REAL
BOMB-
THROW-
ERS!

YO,
SENATOR--

--CATCH
MY
DRIFT?!

MAN IN THE
ROAD... DIDN'T
SEE HIM... GOT TO
SWERVE--

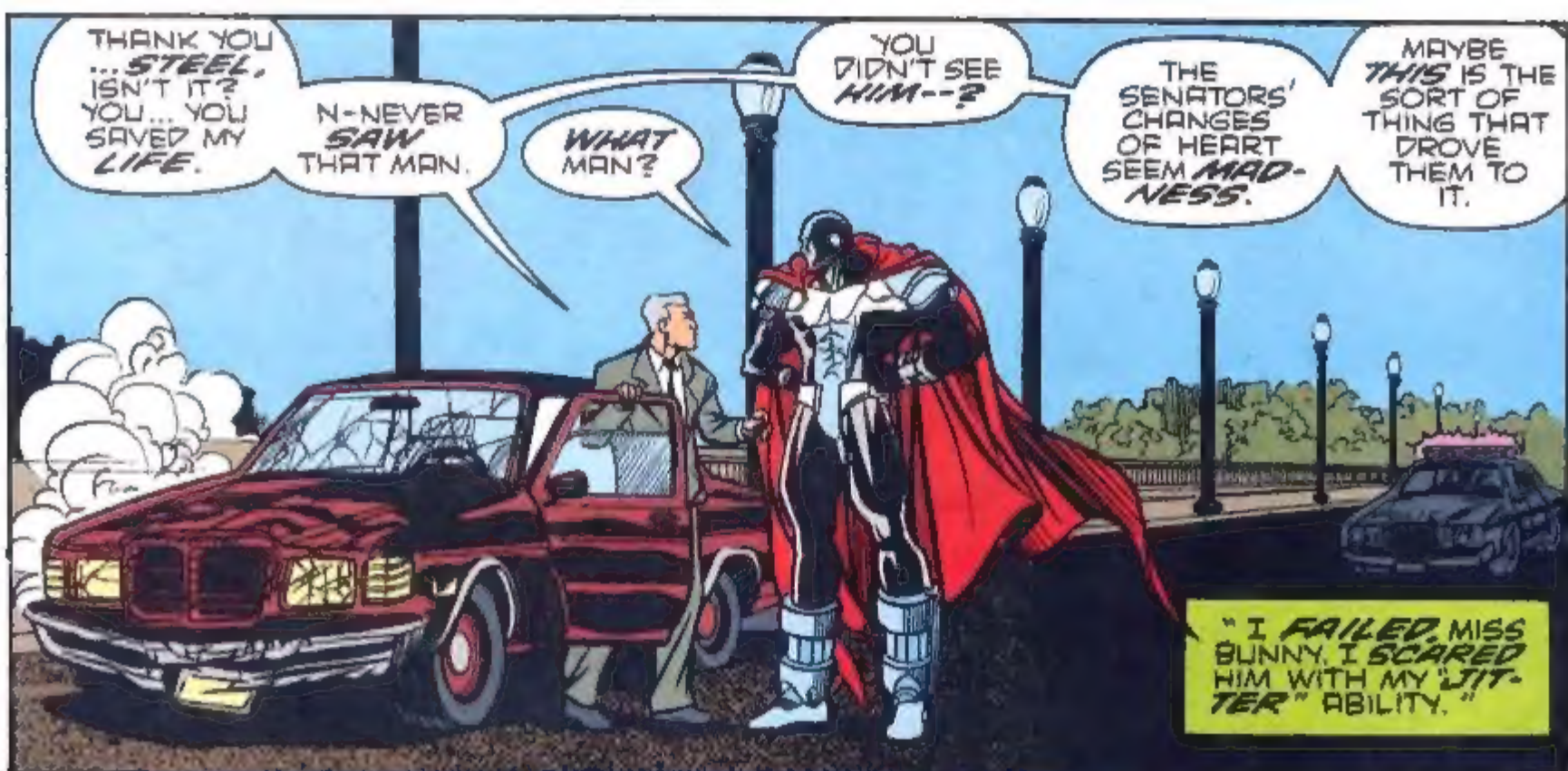
WHOOAAA!

DOUBLE TROUBLE

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THANK YOU
...**STEEL**.
ISN'T IT?
YOU... YOU
SAVED MY
LIFE.

N-NEVER
SAW
THAT MAN.

WHAT
MAN?

YOU
DIDN'T SEE
HIM--?

THE
SENATORS'
CHANGES
OF HEART
SEEM **MAD-
NESS**.

MAYBE
THIS IS THE
SORT OF
THING THAT
DROVE
THEM TO
IT.

"I **FAILED** MISS
BUNNY. I **SCARED**
HIM WITH MY "**JIT-
TER**" ABILITY."

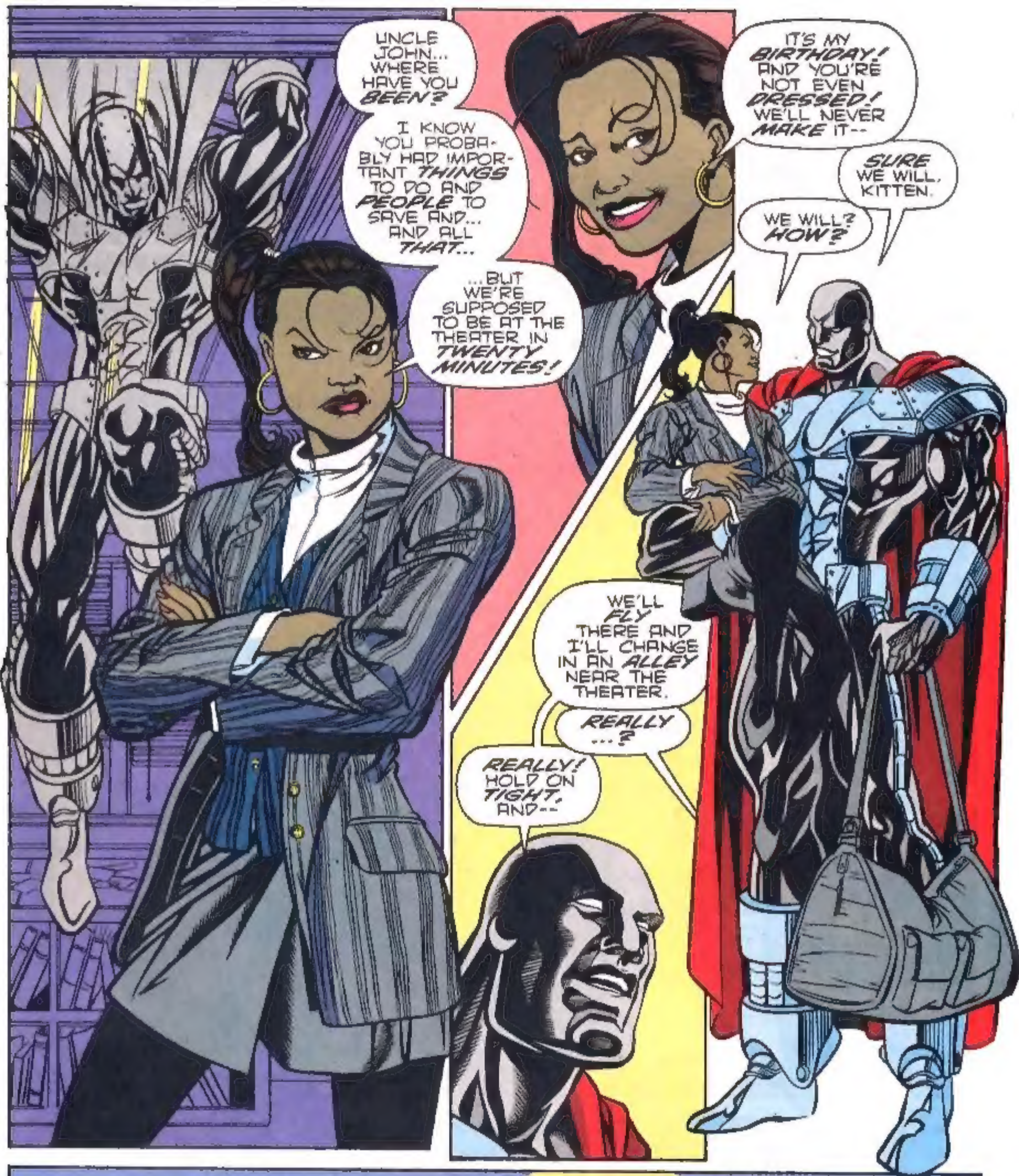
THAT
SENATOR
WAS AS
GOOD AS
DEAD...
'TIL
STEEL
STUCK
HIS
NOSE
IN.

NEVER
MIND,
JITTER.
DEAR, YOU
CAN'T DESTROY
EVERYONE
WHO'LL VOTE
AGAINST
US...

AT
LEAST,
ON YOUR
FIRST **TRY**.
YOU'LL JUST
HAVE TO KEEP
AT IT.

AND DON'T
WORRY. IF
STEEL CON-
TINUES TO
INTERFERE,
WHY THEN...

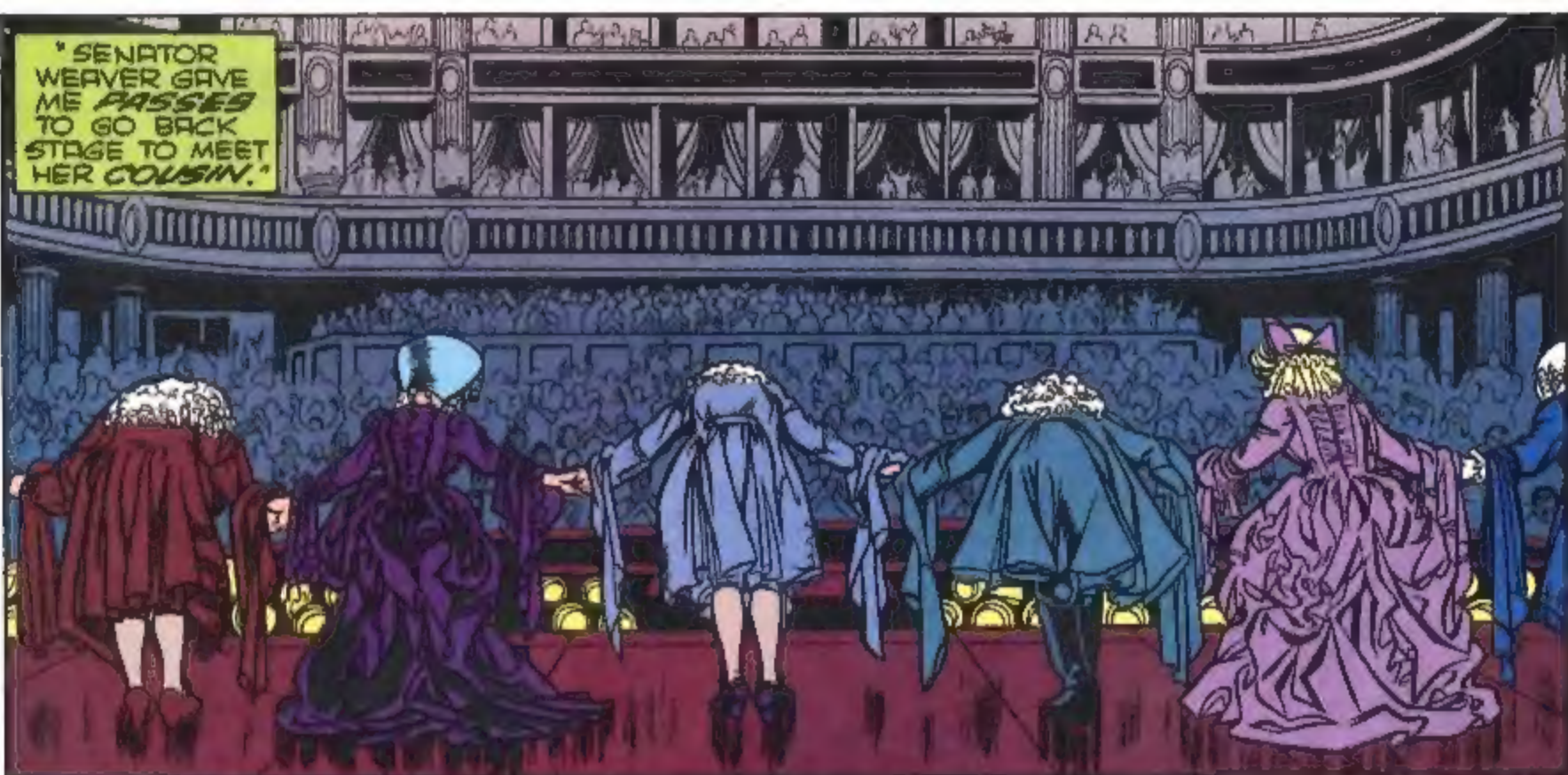
... HE'LL
JUST HAVE
TO JOIN
OUR LITTLE
HIT LIST!



"--WE'RE
OUTTA
HERE!"



"SENATOR
WEAVER GAVE
ME *PASSED*
TO GO BACK
STAGE TO MEET
HER *COUSIN*."



IS THAT
OKAY,
UNCLE
JOHN?



SURE,
BIRTH-
DAY
GIRL...

"...LET'S GO
MEET THE
STAR."



I'M A GREAT
ADMIRER
OF YOUR WORK,
MR. DUNCAN...
SIR.

THANK YOU,
NATASHA. I'M
VERY
PLEASSED TO
MEET YOU.

MY
COUSIN
HAS TOLD
ME ALL
ABOUT
YOU, YOU
SEE.

BRIGHT
AND VERY
PROM-
ISING,
I BELIEVE
SHE SAID.
SARAH--

--CAN
TELL NATE
FOR *HER-*
SELF.



IF SHE WANTS
THE CHILD'S HEAD
TO SWELL LARGER
THAN A HOT-AIR
BALLOON, THAT
IS.

SARAH,
LUV!
WHAT ARE
YOU DOING
HERE?





MEETING
ADJOURNED
EARLY...
AMID HEATED
DEBATE, I
MIGHT ADD.

I UNDERSTAND THE
OPPOSITION THINKS
WE'VE LOST OUR
MINDS.

SO I
THOUGHT I'D
MEET YOU *HERE*,
MILES, INSTEAD
OF AT THE *RES-*
TAURANT.

SENATOR
WEAVER,
I'D LIKE YOU
TO MEET MY
UNCLE, JOHN
HENRY
IRONS.

THIS IS
A REAL
PLEASURE,
SENATOR
WEAVER.

MY NIECE IS
A FAN OF
YOUR *COUS-*
IN'S, BUT I'M
AN ADMIRER
OF *YOURS*.

YOUR
STRONG
WEAPONS
CONTROL
LEGISLA-
TION WAS
IMPOR-
TANT--

I HOPE
YOU WON'T
BE *DISAP-*
POINTED, MR.
IRONS...

...BUT I'VE COME
TO THE CONCLUSION
THAT THAT BILL IS
A *DISSERVICE*
TO AMERICA.

I *REALIZE*
NOW, IT'S NOT
THE *WEAPONS*,
PER SE, THAT'S
THE PROBLEM...

...BUT THE
QUALITY
OF THEIR MANU-
FACTURE.

WHAT--!!?

SENATOR SHELTON WAS JUST KILLED! ANOTHER TRAFFIC ACCIDENT.

WHAT?! HE'S THE SECOND DISSENTER ON THE WEAPONS COMMITTEE TO DIE THIS WEEK.

MILES DUNCAN, MASTER OF DISGUISE...

EVEN YOUNG NATASHA DOESN'T RECOGNIZE ME.

PASSES PROVIDED BY FATHER'S PEOPLE WORKED, EVEN THOUGH SECURITY IN THE SENATE OFFICES HAS BEEN TIGHTENED.

WHICH MEANS PEOPLE IN INTELLIGENCE HERE ARE LOOKING THE OTHER WAY. BUT WHY?

I'M STILL SHOCKED AT SENATOR WEAVER'S ABOUT-FACE ON GUN CONTROL.

NOT TO MENTION PARROTT'S.

I'VE STUDIED THE LAYOUT AND LEARNED ALL I CAN... FOR NOW.

HAVE TO COME BACK TONIGHT AND SNOOP MORE THOROUGHLY. IN DISGUISE OF COURSE, BUT HOW?

I WAS THERE. PARROTT STARED AT HIS COMPUTER AND WHEN HE LOOKED UP...

...HE WAS A DIFFERENT MAN, POLITICALLY.

JUST LIKE SENATOR WEAVER. I BETTER TALK TO UNCLE STEEL.

I'VE HEARD THAT STEEL SAVED SENATOR RAYFORD.

...OR HE'D HAVE BEEN THE THIRD TO DIE.

FIRST THING TO CHECK, THEN, IS THE COMPUTERS! AND I'LL RETURN AS A--



"--**SUPER-HERO**. I'LL MAKE A POINT OF MENTIONING IT TO **FATHER**."

I ASSUME YOU'VE SUPPLIED THE **BLACK SPANDEX** IN AN EFFORT TO FORESTALL ANY STAGY **THEATRICS** ON MY PART.

I KNEW THE "**SUPER-HERO**" GAMBIT WOULD DRIVE THE OLD BOY WILD.

I KNOW, **SIR**. **SPIES** DON'T **ADVERTISE**.

THERE'RE A LOT OF **GADGETS** HERE. NO, **SIR**. YOU NEEDN'T REHEARSE THEIR **USES**.

I'VE PRACTICED **MOST** OF THIS EQUIPMENT SINCE I WAS OLD ENOUGH TO **WALK**.

I KNOW... YOU'VE ALWAYS SAID I HAD A **TALENT** FOR THIS LINE OF WORK. BUT I PREFER **ACT-ING**.

DARK CLOTHING. SO VERY **SUBTLE**.

I MIGHT AS WELL NOT BE JOINING THE **AMERICAN SUPERHERO MILIEU**.

STILL, **ARROGANT**, **MELODRAMATIC** THOUGH I MIGHT BE... I'M NOT A TOTAL **FOOL**...

YES... WELL, I'LL **RING** YOU AS SOON AS I'VE LEARNED ANYTHING. **GOOD-BYE**, **SIR**.

"... AND I
KNOW THAT
SECRECY
DOES HAVE
ITS **USES**."

FATHER
WOULD BE
APPALLED
AT MY CHOICE
OF COSTUME.
STILL, WHEN IN
ROME...

NOW THAT
I'VE PASSED
THE **HIGH-
TECH**
GAUNTLET...

...USING THE
STATE-OF-THE-
ART **EQUIPMENT**
FATHER PROVIDED
TO ACCESS THE
**SERVICE BASE-
MENT**...

...IT
LOOKS TO
BE ABSURDLY
EASY TO
ENTER THE
BUILDING
PROPER--

**CLOMP
CLOMP**

GUARDS!

MAYBE
NOT AS
EASY AS I
THOUGHT.

STILL, WITHOUT
THOSE HIGH-
TECH TOYS THAT
LOOPED THE
SENSORS...

...I
WOULDN'T
HAVE GOT-
TEN **THIS**
FAR.

CLICK

AHH!
NOW TO
GET **UP-
STAIRS**...

" TO SARAH'S
OFFICE. "

GLAD IT'S
A CLOUDY
NIGHT OR I
WOULDN'T
STAND A
CHANCE OF
SECRECY.

EVEN
DARK AS
IT IS. I'D
BETTER
MAKE THIS
FAST!

GADGET I THREW
TOGETHER. HA! I
LABORED OVER
IT FOR HOURS...

...SHOULD
LOOP THE
ALARMS... I
HOPE.

WINDOW'S
LOCKED
GOING TO HAVE
TO APPLY A
LITTLE HYDRAULIC
MUSCLE...

IF I
WANT TO
GET IT UN-
LOCKED.

GUARDS
SOUNDS
LIKE THE
PLACE IS
CRAWLING
WITH THEM

LUCKILY I'M
ABLE TO FLY
DOWN THE
STAIRWELL AND
AVOID TRIPPING
ANY SENSORS.

INCREASED
SECURITY
ISN'T SURPRISING,
I GUESS, CON-
SIDERING THE RECENT
DEATHS!

THAT
THEY WERE
ALMOST
SURELY
MURDERS...

HAS
EVERY
ORGANIZA-
TION IN-
SIDE THE
BELTWAY
IN AN UP-
ROAR.

AND
SINCE THE
VICTIMS
WERE BOTH
SENA-
TORS--

KRAK!
WHAK!

WHAT'S
THAT?!
SOUNDS
LIKE--

DIDN'T DROP
HIM QUICKLY
ENOUGH! MUST
HAVE ACTIVATED
AN ALARM!

EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE

I'VE LOST
MY TOUCH. IF

GUARD

I'VE LOST
MY *TOUCH*. IF
I EVER *HAD*
A TOUCH.

GLARD
SHOULDN'T
HAVE EVEN
KNOWN I WAS
THERE.

**FATHER
WILL LAUGH
HIS BLOODY
HEAD
OFF.**

4. YEARS
FROM NOW
WHEN I
GET OUT OF
PRISON.

IF I
EVER
GET OUT OF
PRISON

CLOMP
CLOMP
CLOMP

**MORE GUARDS!
OUR TAXPAYER
DOLLARS HARD
AT WORK!**

BUT
THE LAST
THING I
NEED IS
TO HAVE
THEM
MILLING
AROUND.

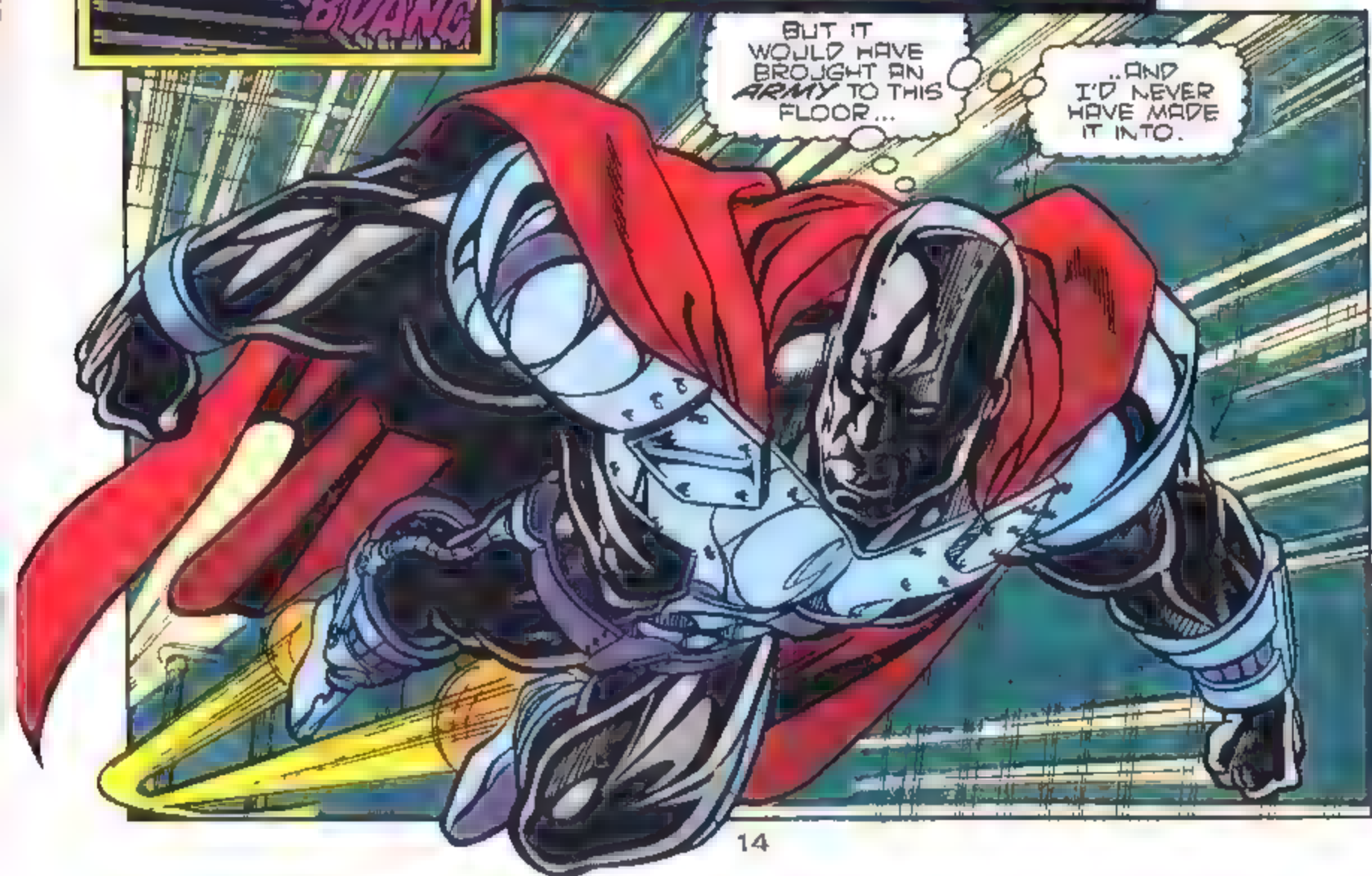
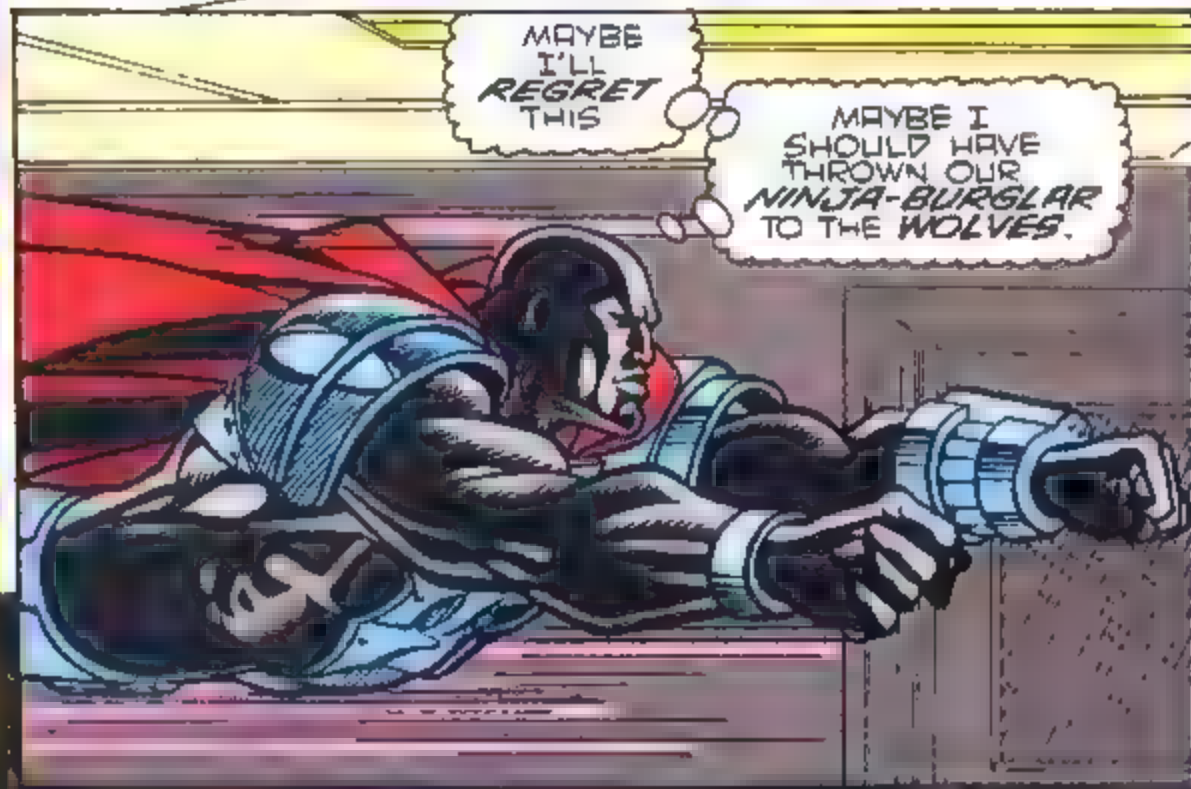
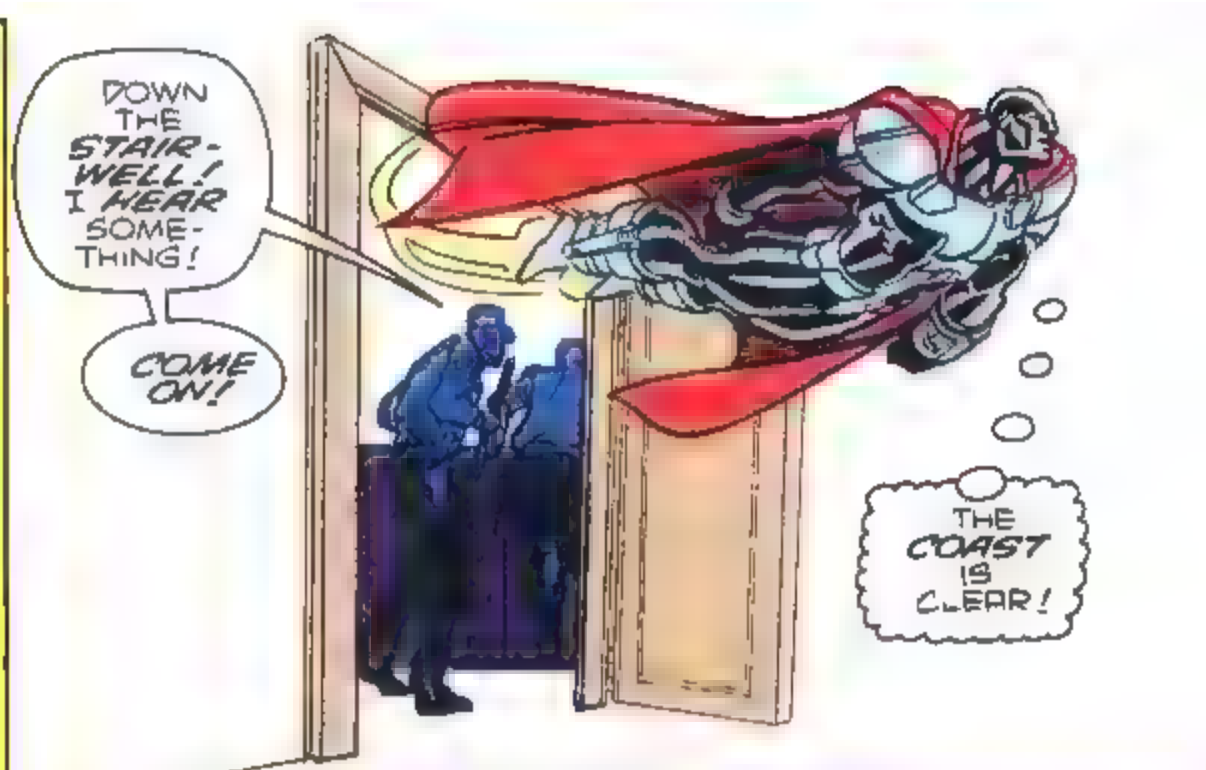
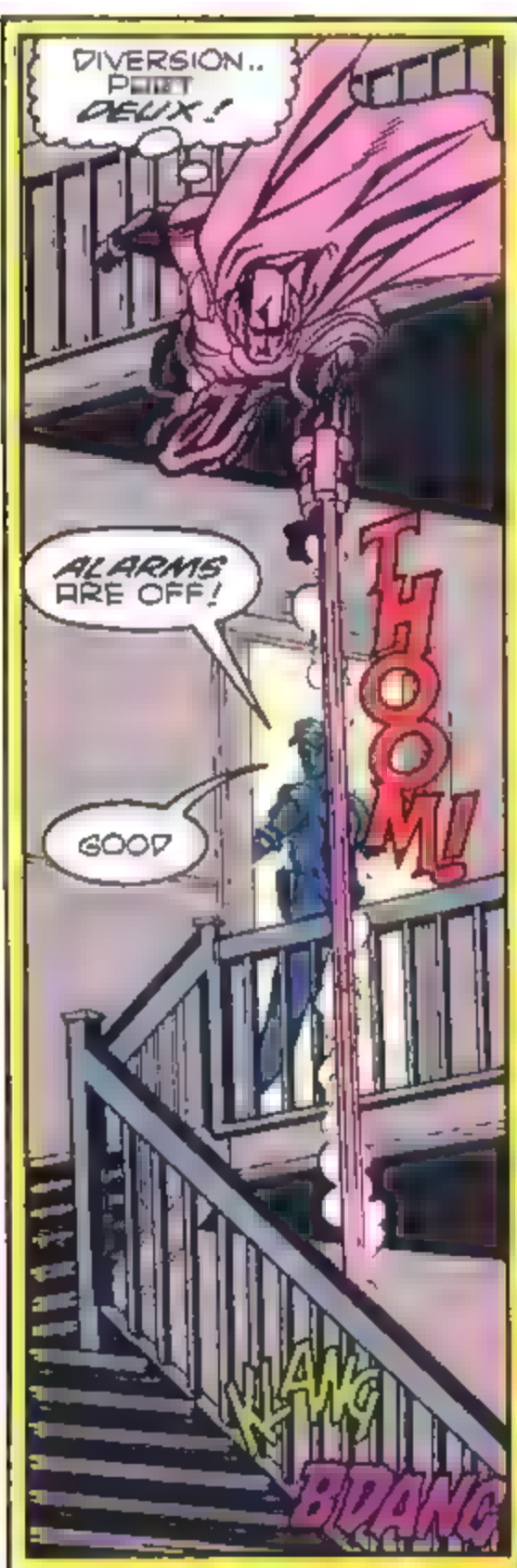
WHILE
I'M TRY-
ING TO FIND
OUT WHAT'S
GOING
ON.

"...I THINK A LITTLE
DIVERSION IS IN
ORDER "

LOOK!
THE STAIR-
WELL DOOR!
IT'S OPEN!

**SOMEBODY
DROPPED
SMITTY!**

DRAW YOUR
WEAPONS...
AND, JENSEN--
SHUT OFF
THAT BLASTED
ALARM!



SENATOR
WEAVER'S
OFFICE

TOOK
A LITTLE
EXTRA
MUSCLE
BUT--

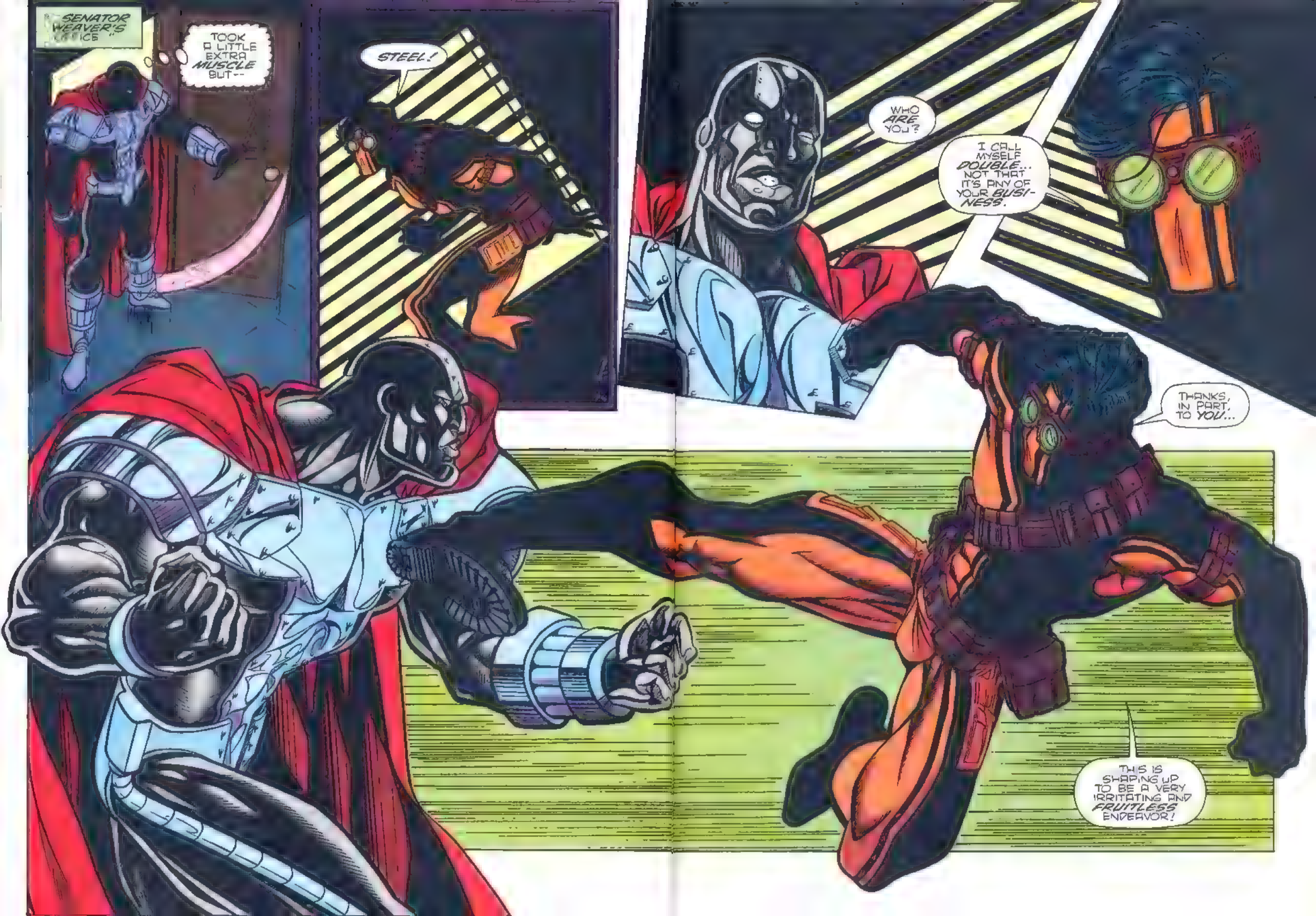
STEEL!

WHO
ARE
YOU?

I CALL
MYSELF
DOUBLE...
NOT THAT
IT'S ANY OF
YOUR **BUSI-**
NESS.

THANKS,
PART,
TO YOU...

THIS IS
SHAPING UP
TO BE A VERY
IRRITATING AND
FRUITLESS
ENDEAVOR!



I DI-
VERTED
THOSE
GUARDS...

KLANG!

BLOW
WOULD HAVE
FELLED
AN ORDINARY
MAN. DIDN'T
EVEN **FAZE**
HIM.

BUT AT
THIS RATE,
WE MIGHT
AS WELL JUST
SET OFF MORE
ALARMS!

MUST
BE THE
ARMOR.

WHICH
MUST BE
HEAVY.

MAYBE
I CAN USE
ITS **WEIGHT**
AGAINST
HIM!

HE
MOVES
LIKE
GREASED
LIGHT-
NING.

BETTER
TAKE HIM OUT
FAST... IF
I CAN!

IF HE'S
OUR
MURDERER,
HE'S CAP-
TURED.

IF NOT...
AT LEAST
I'VE **SHUT**
HIM **UP!**

THE
GUARDS
AREN'T
STUPID.
YOU
KNOW

THERE'S
ONLY SO MUCH
MISDIRECTION
I CAN **GET**
AWAY WITH

MIS-
DIRECTION?
THE GLARDS
AREN'T HERE...
BECAUSE OF
SOMETHING..
YOU DD?

JUST
DON'T MAKE
ME *REGRET*
IT MORE THAN
I ALREADY
DO.

WHAT DO
YOU KNOW
ABOUT THE
POLITICAL
ABOUT-FACE
OF FORMERLY
LIBERAL...

...ANTI-GUN
MEMBERS OF
THE WEAPONS
COMMITTEE?

STEEL'S
PURPORTEDLY
ONE OF THE
GOOD GUYS.
I HOPE--

MY NAME
IS *MILES
DUNCAN*.

THE
ACTOR
...!!?

AMONG OTHER
THINGS IT'S A
LONG STORY.
BUT I'M ALSO
SENATOR SARAH
WEAVER'S FIRST
COUSIN.

I SUSPECT WE'RE
HERE FOR THE SAME
REASON--

NOW
WHAT DO
YOU KNOW
ABOUT THE
SEATHS
OF SENATORS
SHELTON AND
KROFT...

...AND THE
ATTEMPTED
MURDER
OF SENATOR
RAYFORD?

--TO FIND
OUT WHAT
HAPPENED
TO MY
COUSIN...

.. AND
THE *OTHER*
SENATORS IN
THE WEAPONS
CONTROL COM-
MITTEE

I
AM.

NOW
ALL WE
HAVE TO
DO IS
BREAK
INTO THE
COMPUTER...

... AND SEE
IF WE CAN FIND
ANYTHING THAT
WOULD **BRAIN-**
WASH YOUR
COUSIN.

SARAH'S
COMPUTER
FILES ARE
PROTECTED
THROUGH A
PASSWORD
SYSTEM.

ORDINARILY,
WE'D HAVE TO
KNOW THE
MAGIC WORD
TO GET BEYOND
THE DESKTOP
SCREEN.

HOWEVER...
AN UNKNOWN
PASSWORD
WON'T STOP
WHAT'S ON
THIS LITTLE
DISC.

WHERE
DID YOU--?

STATE
SECRET.
BUT
TRUST
ME!

THIS
PROGRAM
WAS
CONSTRUCTED
BY THE FINEST
MINDS
AVAILABLE.

IF ANY
GHOST
PROGRAMS
HAVE BEEN
INTRODUCED,
THIS WILL
SHOW--

WELL,
WELL, IT
APPEARS THAT
THE **HARD**
DRIVE HAS
BEEN SECRETLY
ALTERED WITHIN
THE LAST FEW
DAYS.

BUT
ALTERED
BY **WHOM...**
AND TO DO
WHAT--?

LET'S
SEE IF WE
CAN FIND
OUT.

WHOOOF

SOUNDS LIKE
SOMEBODY'S
TAMPERING
WITH ONE OF
THE SENATORS'
COMPUTERS.

SO IT
DOES,
DIGIT
DEAR.

ALARM
BOARD SUG-
GESTS OUR
TAMPERER IS
IN *SENATOR
WEAVER'S*
OFFICE.

APPARENTLY
SOMEONE THERE
HAS DISCOVERED
OUR...
ALTERATIONS.

DO YOU
THINK IT'S
STEEL?

NOT A
CHANCE.
THE DIAG-
NOSTIC
PROGRAM
IS SIMPLY
TOO SO-
PHISTI-
CATED.

IT WOULD
HAVE TAKEN
STEEL YEARS
TO CONSTRUCT
IT. HE HADN'T
THE *TIME*...

...OR
FOR THAT
MATTER, THE
TALENT!

JITTER,
TAKE
WORM
TO SENATOR
WEAVER'S
OFFICE.

WHAT-
EVER THE
PROBLEM
IS, LET
HIM *DEAL*
WITH IT.

YOU
GOT
IT, MS.
BLUNNY!

C'MON,
WORM!
YOU GOT
A M-M-
MEET-
ING...

...WITH
DESTINY!

WHAT
ARE YA,
SCARED?
AIN'T YOU M-
M-MAN ENOUGH
TA TAKE
'EM?

I'M MAN
ENOUGH...
AND THEN
SOME!

IT IS
STEEL! AND
ANOTHER
MAN! BUT
MS. BUNNY
SAID --

WORM'S
THE NAME...


...AND
TERMINA-
TION'S MY
GAME.

WHO--?

WHY
WOULD ANY-
BODY CALL
HIMSELF...
"WORM"?

HACKER
SLANG, MY
FRIENDS...

...FOR A
ROGUE PROGRAM
THAT ENDLESSLY
DUPLICATES
ITSELF.



I ASSUME
THAT THE
REASON
FOR MY CHOICE
IS NOW
OBVIOUS!

TO BE
CONTINUED!